

ATTENTION HMS FISHERMEN

Researchers at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory have notified the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that they will be conducting subsurface oceanographic surveys in the waters between Florida and Cuba during February 2002. The researchers hope to avoid any conflict with fishing gear, particularly pelagic longline gear, during the surveys. The surveys will be conducted by two research vessels towing instrumented cables at depths between the surface and 1000 feet. While conducting the survey, these research vessels will have limited maneuvering capability due to the towing configurations and the design of the survey. Operations will be conducted 24 hours per day for the duration of the survey period. Based on the survey locations and the towed instrumentation supporting the survey, there is potential for conflicts with longline fishing in these areas during the specified time periods with a significant chance of damage or destruction to longline fishing gear.

Survey operations will be conducted in two areas as outlined in the map below.

From February 5 through February 14, 2002, the survey will occur between the following coordinates: (1) 23° 30.0'N, 84° 00.0'W; (2) 23° 30.0'N, 85° 40.0'W; (3) 24° 30.0'N, 85° 40.0'W; (4) 24° 30.0'N, 84° 00.0'W; (5) 23° 30.0'N, 84° 00.0'W.

From February 15 through February 24, 2002, the survey will occur between the following coordinates: (1) 24° 30.0'N, 84° 00.0'W; (2) 24° 29.0'N, 81° 15.0'W; (3) 23° 30.0'N, 81° 15.0'W; (4) 23° 30.0'N, 84° 00.0'W; (5) 24° 30.0'N, 84° 00.0'W.

NMFS is providing this FAX notice as a courtesy to highly migratory species fishermen to mitigate any potential conflicts. NMFS is not sponsoring and is not involved in this research survey. For further information regarding this research, contact Gary Keys, John Hopkins University, at (240) 228-4529.

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Date

